

# BUSINESS INSIDER

## Fox News host Kelly Wright says he endured on-the-job hair jokes and racist comments



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Kelly Wright is one of several Fox News employees accusing the network of racial discrimination.

*Veronika Bondarenko*

Fox News anchor Kelly Wright said that he was sidelined, insulted and asked to align to a "Jim Crow caricature" during more than a decade at the network.

Kelly, who has worked at Fox since 2003 and has received two Emmy awards for his documentary work, said that he "reluctantly" joined the [thirteen employees](#) currently accusing Fox News of racial discrimination in New York state court.

"This hurts," said Wright at a Wednesday morning news conference, adding that he has been trying to bring up issues of "systemic and institutional bias" at the network for years.

In the lawsuit, plaintiffs allege that Wright had endured racist comments about "having too much afro," got repeatedly passed over for promotion in favor of white colleagues, and was asked to portray stereotypical Jim Crow characters on air.

"I could no longer sit in silence, collect my paycheck, and act like I didn't experience racial bias on my own level as an on-air personality," he said, adding that people he encountered would often joke that he would get more airtime if he dyed his hair blond.

In a separate lawsuit, former Fox employee Adasa Blanco accused ousted Fox News comptroller Judith Slater of calling African American men "women-beaters," mocking stereotypical pronunciations of words such as "month" and "ask," and making repeated derogatory jokes about people of Chinese, Mexican, and Indian descent.

The allegations of racial discrimination come shortly after prominent news host Bill O'Reilly [was fired](#) after multiple women came forward with alleged sexual harassment complaints.

"Rather than viewing Mr. Wright as the two-time Emmy award recipient he is, Mr. O'Reilly saw Mr. Wright as a singing entertainer," Wright's attorney Douglas Wigdor said at the news conference. According to Wigdor, O'Reilly once withheld Wright's coverage of the Ferguson community "because it showed Blacks in 'too positive' a light."

In a [statement](#), Fox News said that it "vehemently denies the race discrimination claims in both lawsuits" and would "vigorously defend these cases."

Wigdor said that he has since been receiving calls from other Fox News employees about instances of racial discrimination at the network. He and his clients are currently seeking for both systemic change within the network and compensation for each of the victims.

"There's no amount of money can undo what they went through, but under the law they deserve to be compensated," Wigdor said.